

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 5-14, 16-25, 28-31 and 36-38 are now pending in the application. Claims 2, 4, 15, 26, 27, and 32-35 have been cancelled. Claims 21-25, 28, 30, 31, 36, and 37 have been amended. Claim 38 has been added. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection(s) in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

Claims 21-24 stand objected to because they depend from cancelled claim 15. Applicants have amended claims 21-24 to depend from claim 14 to correct this informality.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner states that claims 1, 3, 5-14 and 16-20 are allowed. The Examiner further states that claims 21-24 would be allowable if rewritten to depend from claim 14. As described above, claims 21-24 have been amended to depend from claim 14. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to claims 21-24 places them in condition for allowance.

The Examiner states that claims 26-30 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As a result, Applicants have amended claim 25 to include the limitations of claim 26. Further, Applicants have added new independent claim 38 to include the limitations of claims 25

and 27. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 25 (and dependant claim 30) and claim 38 (and dependant claims 28 and 29) are now in condition for allowance.

The Examiner states that claims 35-36 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As a result, Applicants have amended claim 31 to include the limitations of claims 32-35. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 31 (and dependant claims 36 and 37) are now in condition for allowance.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 25 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,078,266 (Rackley). This rejection is respectfully traversed. As described above, claim 25 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 26. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 25 is in condition for allowance.

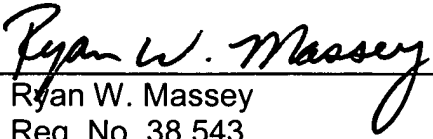
Claims 31-34 and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rackley in view of U.S. Pat. No. 2,061,426 (Baumann). Claims 31-34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,477,960 (Chen) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,837,370 (Shindo). These rejections are respectfully traversed. As described above, claim 31 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 32-35. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 31 and 37 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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